

# Office of Juvenile Justice



July 25, 2016

Jay Dardenne  
Commissioner of Administration  
Louisiana Division of Administration  
P.O. Box 94095  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Dear Commissioner Dardenne:

Per HCR 25 of the 2016 Regular Session, this correspondence serves as the report of Fiscal Year 2016-2017 initiatives to ensure efficiency.

The Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) is a cabinet-level agency whose head, the Deputy Secretary, reports directly to the Governor of Louisiana. The official title is Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Youth Services, Office of Juvenile Justice (DPSC/YS/OJJ). Under the direction of the Deputy Secretary, the OJJ has policy oversight and support responsibilities for state programs for youth who are adjudicated delinquent, as well as any youth and their families ruled in need of services by courts of juvenile jurisdiction, including FINS - Families in Need of Services. OJJ is responsible for youth assigned by the court system, either for supervision or custody in non secure residential placement or secure care facilities. OJJ also provides services to youth under local court supervision.

The Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C)/Youth Services consists of two budgetary divisions: The Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) and Louisiana Housing for Juvenile Offenders (LHJO). OJJ administers 6 Programs: Administration, North Region, Central/Southwest Region, Southeast Region, Contract Services, and Auxiliary.

The responsibilities of the agency are defined in accordance with **RS 36:408 H (1-2)** which states that the Office of Juvenile Justice shall, have responsibility for the care, custody, security, and treatment of children adjudicated delinquent and children of families adjudicated in need of services committed to the custody of or placed under the supervision of the office of juvenile justice or of youth services pursuant to the Children's Code except as otherwise provided by law.

For the last 8 years, OJJ has closely examined its processes and structure with a dual purpose: finding operational efficiencies and ensuring that best practices are utilized. All of these efficiencies will be continued into FY2017.

## **Departmental Structure**

Prior to 2012, facility operation and community based probation and parole were operated and managed separately. Each area reported to different executive team members at Central Office located in Baton Rouge. A new organizational structure was put in place in 2012 that divided the state into 3 regions each with a regional director supervising both facilities and community based services. This created a more cohesive team and allowed for direct oversight on a daily basis. Regionalization was achieved with existing resources, producing savings in areas such as travel expenses and a more efficient monitoring and usage of resources (personnel and contract services).

In a two-phased implementation, OJJ consolidated much of its back office functions with the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The human resources, purchasing, IT, contracts, and finance functions were all transferred to the DPS resulting in 66 positions being eliminated at OJJ's Central Office. OJJ's Central Office has decreased from 101 TO in FY2012 to 43 TO in FY2016.

In FY2017, OJJ will leave two Central Office TO vacant in a cost saving effort.

## **Processes**

Per the recommendation of the Louisiana Government Efficiencies Management Support (GEMS) initiative, OJJ sought to increase the federal funds that it claims under the Title IV-E program.

With the aid of contractor Sequoia, OJJ revised its random moment time study (RMTS) to maximize collections for costs associated to support youth in our care in the community.

In FY2017, OJJ will work with a consultant to revise its rate methodology used to reimburse the agency for cost of care expenses for youth that are in non secure custody with hopes to further increase the reimbursement from the Title IV-E program.

## **Procurement**

Before and after consolidation of the procurement function with DPS, OJJ took many steps to find efficiencies in the services and products procured to treat the young people in its care.

In 2010, OJJ issued an RFP to privatize medical and mental health services in secure facilities resulting in an over 60% reduction in cost from the previous provider. At the time of this writing, OJJ is in the RFP process to continue these services for the next two years.

In 2012, OJJ became a partner in the Louisiana Behavioral Health Partnership (BHP) and CSOC resulting in lower per diem cost for a large number of our group homes. In late 2015, the BHP and CSOC were integrated into the Healthy Louisiana initiative (formerly the Bayou Health Plans). In FY2017, OJJ will continue to work with Healthy Louisiana partners to provide services to young people in our custody and under our supervision through Medicaid funding services where appropriate and available.

In 2014, per statewide GEMS recommendations, OJJ reduced all social services contracts for services directly provided to young offenders in the community by at least 10% and reduced

underutilized slots. Currently, OJJ monitors these services and their utilization on a weekly basis, eliminating slots and redirecting resources as necessary.

### **Elimination or Improvement of Ineffective or Inefficient Services**

In 2003 following a federal lawsuit, Louisiana began to make sweeping reforms in the treatment of young people in the juvenile justice system, transforming the system from a custodial juvenile justice model to a therapeutic juvenile justice model of care. The agency began focusing on staff and youth relationships in the secure care facilities, created performance-based contracts for residential facilities, and expanded services to prevention and diversion. Following national best practices, OJJ sought to place young people in the least restrictive environment to get needed treatment, reserving secure care (the most expensive part of the continuum) for young people who were deemed a threat to public safety. This effort continues.

In 2013, OJJ adopted new practices focused at our FINS custody population, as a result, OJJ's group home budget was decreased by \$3.2 million and 24 TO in field services were eliminated.

In 2014, OJJ depopulated the Jetson Center for Youth. The Jetson Center for Youth is a 65 year-old state operated juvenile facility. Its facilities are obsolete and do not support the current OJJ Louisiana therapeutic model.

In 2014 per the recommendation of the GEMS initiative, OJJ adjusted the caseload of PPOs resulting in the reduction in TO of our field staff and increased the span of control. Average caseload of PPOs went from 1:20 to 1:25. In FY2017, OJJ will leave approximately 24 PPO positions vacant resulting in caseloads increasing to 1:28.

From 2008-2014, we adjusted our secure care facility capacity and the resources related to housing young people in a secure care environment. Based on the FY2017 budget forecast, OJJ implemented a revised intake and review process for secure care youth in May 2016. These processes have resulted in a decline in the secure care population, but have increased the need for further resources in other less expensive levels of care. These efforts will continue through FY2017.

If you have any questions concerning OJJ's efficiency efforts, please contact myself or Undersecretary Gearry Williams ([gearry.williams@la.gov](mailto:gearry.williams@la.gov) or 225-287-7900).

Sincerely,

James Bueche, Ph.D.,  
Deputy Secretary